

## The Power of Collective Impact in Creating Regional Trails



California Trails & Greenways Conference

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Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Laura Cohen, Western Region Director

### Session Overview: Speakers

- Laura Cohen, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
- Yves Zsutty, Trail Manager, City of San Jose Trail Program
- Laura Thompson, Project Manager, San Francisco Bay Trail Project

#### Session Overview: Content

- What is Collective Impact?
- What are the key components to successful regional trail collaborations, and how do we overcome common challenges?
- "Playing well with others": Working across jurisdictional boundaries and across agencies;
- Collaboration in action: California success stories

### **Quick Poll**

Any burning questions or specific topics/issues you are hoping we'll cover today?

### **Presentation Overview**

- 1. What's Collective Impact?
- Successful collaboration models in California
- 3. New: Bay Area Trails Collaborative
- 4. What are the magic ingredients of successful collaborations? What are the pitfalls?
- 5. Tips for Success

### What's Collective Impact?

 Commitment of a group of actors & stakeholders from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem

 Significant shift from paradigm of "isolated impact" – single groups acting alone and competing for funding

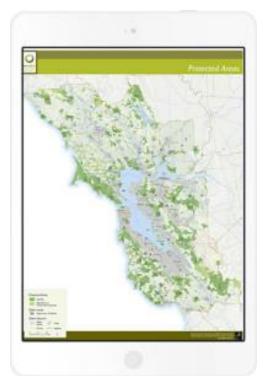
## What's Collective Impact?



 Resources: Toolkit for working groups as they form a collective, determine strategic direction, develop implementation plans, and identify measurement indicators

http://collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/

## Successful Models of Collective Impact in California



#### Bay Area Open Space Council:

network of more than 60 non-profits and agencies dedicated to land conservation, stewardship and recreation

Achievements: Created Bay Area Conservancy program, secured \$193 million of bond funding, which supported 425 projects, including 200 miles of trails

## Successful Collective Impact Efforts Outside California



- The Circuit is a planned 750-mile trail network connecting 2 states and 2 metro areas – Philadelphia, PA & Camden, NJ - across the Delaware River.
- \$23 million TIGER grant (2009)
- The Circuit Coalition: non-profits, govt agencies, private sector, supported by foundations, including William Penn Fdn



## New: Bay Area Trails Collaborative

- Launched June 2014 by RTC
- Purpose: Advance completion of Bay Area trail networks by leveraging our collective influence to increase funding and advance best practices and innovative trail development strategies.
- Partners: Over 20 trail leaders from nonprofits & agencies

## Bay Area Trails Collaborative

#### Early Actions:

- Shaping Active Transportation Program (ATP), California's largest trail/bike/ped funding program
- Advocating for MTC to create regional trail count program
- Innovative Public/Private
   Partnerships to advance trails

### Tips for Success

## Magic Ingredients of Successful Collaboration:

- 1. Common agenda and goals
- 2. Shared Metrics
- 3. Joint Action, Mutually Beneficial
- 4. Trust and Communication
- 5. Lead Organization

# Overcoming Common Challenges

#### Challenges:

- 1.Getting agreement on goals/objective
- 2. Sharing workload
- 3.Commitment and follow through
- 4. Trust and Communication

#### Solutions:

- 1. Inclusive goal setting process; get buy in
- Form action teams; if no volunteers, table the task.
   Start small, build on successes.
- 3. Task leads; regular check-in between meetings
- 4. Ask: what motivates your participation?



"Creating a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors to build healthier places for healthier people"

- Create trail building resources
  - Provide technical assistance
- Advance bike/ped/trail policy and funding programs
  - Create trail-user tools: TrailLink.com; guidebooks

www.railstotrails.org